



"And so I calmly took the dress and put it on, just to amuse myself," I heard the secretary saying, "and did my hair the way the others do there, you know. And it was so late I thought no one would find me here."

"And if I hadn't left my pipe on the table no one would have found you, and I—think what I should have missed!" Vincent's voice was eloquent.

"Of course, it was very vain of me, very vain," she went on; "but you know when a girl has to earn her own living she gets a little tired of all work and no play, and sometimes the impulse to pretend she's fortunate and happy and—pretty—the secretary flushed under Vincent's gaze as she faltered the last word, and hurried on—and like the others—is so strong that it tempts her to deck herself out in borrowed plumes and sit in an empty drawing room at 12 o'clock at night enjoying the illusion for a brief hour."

"No," said Vincent, softly, "I don't think it was vain; I think it was the most natural thing in the world, and—and I'm glad you did it," he ended, rather lamely.

The secretary laughed, and I wondered what there was about the sound that made Vincent rave over it. Then, as his eyes wandered to her hair, he sighed.

"Why sighest thou, oh, furnace?" she smiled at him.

"I was just thinking about something."

"About what?"

"You don't want to hear?"

"Ah! But I do!"

"All right, then." He turned on her swiftly. "I was just looking," he said, "at your hair. I'll bet the angels have halos like that."

The secretary blushed. "It's horrid hair," she said, giving it a vindictive little pull that only brought it to a more charming disarray. "I hate the color of it. Why, when I was a child I never could bear to have the hair of the fairy tales have a shining head of golden hair, and I used to think mine was gold, and one day when I said so and was told, 'No, your hair is red, not gold,' I cried for days afterward."

"You poor little thing!" he said, his face as full of sympathy as if those tears had just been shed. And for the life of her the secretary couldn't help her lip trembling, though she knew it was absurd and was very much ashamed of herself. Vincent broke the silence first. "We might do a little on the 'Dead Barons of Wyckhoff,'" he suggested. It was evident that our affair of last night was uppermost in his mind, for his air was very abstracted.

"No, thank you, my lord. This is my evening off. I am no longer Miss Marsh, the secretary, but Miss Marsh, the lady of leisure."

"I didn't think of it as work, and I thought perhaps you didn't, either, when we did it together."

"Little boys shouldn't think; it's a bad habit," she said, severely; "besides, you talk like 'I' in the 'Dolly Dialogues.'"

At this Vincent's face grew desperate, and I saw that she had goaded him into asking her the question that had been on his mind all day, and I nearly fell off the sofa in my efforts to hear without being seen.

"Do 1?" he said. "Well, that's because I've something I've been wanting to ask you all day long. It's something very personal, and, of course, I've no right—that is, you won't think so," the boy was stumbling pitifully, "but I've got to know; it's so hard to believe that you would do it deliberately. Is it true?"

"Lord Wilfred," said the girl, straightening up, "you must speak more clearly if you want me to understand what you have been saying."

"It's this," said Lord Wilfred, facing her abruptly and terribly in earnest. "Someone told me last night that you were a married woman. Is it true?"

I could not see the face of the secretary, but I could not help perceiving the ring of truth in her voice.

"I'm not married," she said, simply. "I told Mr. Terhune so because I wanted to disabuse him of a false impression he was laboring under. But what is it to you?"

"This," said Wilfred, and he leaned toward her suddenly and grasped her hands and put his face within an inch of hers—I could see by the freckle light its look of determination and ineffable relief. The secretary gave a little cry and drew back. I conjectured that Wilfred was on the point of making an irretrievable ass of himself, so I interrupted proceedings by knocking a book off the sofa and rising to my feet. At the first sound of the book falling the two had jumped to their feet and stood, the girl shrinking close to Wilfred and Wilfred with his arm thrown around her.

"Who goes there?" he said, sternly, as he discovered my figure in the gloom, and "Ah!—it's you, Terhune," as I came into the circle of light, in a tone I hope I may never hear from him again.

As the secretary saw who it was she sprang away and was gone from the room in a second.

"Well," he said, with a sneer, as the curtains closed behind her. "Say, dropper, meddling as usual. What can I do for you?"

I sat down on the stool. "Sit down," I said, with quiet authority, "and we'll talk it over." He sat down. In moments like this he forgets his independence and remembers that at one time he used to obey me habitually. I wanted to comfort him, but I knew my duty better. "Vincent," I said, appealingly, "don't you see it won't do? She's no match for you—a girl with no family and no money, and of her station in life. Give it up, I implore you. Think of your father. There has never been a mésalliance in the family; it would break his heart."

Vincent raised his head. "Mrs. Armistead says her family is perfectly respectable," he said. "I asked her."

"Perfectly respectable!" I repeated, contemptuously. "Think of a Vincent marrying a girl who has nothing in her favor but the fact that her family was 'perfectly respectable!'"

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MARSHALL, MO.

The evening before the last day of our stay we all spent together in the music room. We were very jolly, and yet underneath it all I think the girls were a little saddened by our approaching departure, and Wilfred and I felt a certain regret that the end of our delightful visit had come, though of course I had fully determined to propose to Agatha Sixth on the morrow. I was rather surprised, therefore, when Vincent suddenly complained of headache and, excusing himself, went up to his room. When I went up to my own room I rapped on his door, but he made no answer and I concluded that he must be asleep. The next morning, much to my astonishment, he did not saunter in and out of my room as he was accustomed to do of a morning, but as it was late I did not stop to investigate. But when we awoke came, and still no Vincent, I went up to his room, for I thought he should be up and doing on this, his last day at Castle Wyckhoff, when he was to leave for London on the 4:36 train that afternoon. I say "he" not "we," for I felt more confident of my success with Agatha Sixth that day than I had done the evening before, and although I had not yet had the opportunity to put the great question, I felt that it was very possible that in the guise of accepted lover I might not have to take the 4:35 that afternoon.

When I reached Vincent's room I knocked twice, and, receiving no answer, entered, and was somewhat alarmed to find that he was not there, though his bed had been slept in. Anxious, without knowing why, I tore downstairs and called for Mrs. Armistead. That good lady met me at the foot of the stairs in answer to my summons, with an air as anxious as my own.

"Have you seen Lord Vincent?" I asked her.

"Have you seen my secretary?" she replied, without answering my question. "She's not in her room, though her bed has been slept in. But she hasn't had her breakfast, and I can't find her anywhere."

"You don't mean it!" I ejaculated, and a sickening fear turned me cold. "Perhaps this has something to do with it," said Mrs. Armistead. "I found it on the front hall table underneath the mail bag."

Her anxiety was apparently sincere, and yet somehow it rang false to me. With impatient fingers I seized the folded paper she drew from her reticule. It read as follows:

"Dear Old Arch: Sorry to deceive you so, but I've gone and done it—that rash, foolish thing you told me not to do; at least, by the time you get this note the deed will be done. And I so dreaded your reproaches that I never so much as asked you to be the best man. But I couldn't help it, Arch, honest I couldn't. Not to save my soul, she shouldn't have had eyes like stars and hair like autumn leaves. As for the money, hang the stuffy old millions. I say! Every pound of it is so many glass beads to me in comparison to what I have this day gained. I wish you joy of them and of the Honorable Agatha. Dear old boy, forgive me if you can; and if you want to do me one last favor come down to the station in time to meet the eleven-seventeen for London and hear my last injunctions."

"When did you find this?" I gasped. But I didn't wait to hear her reply, for a glance at the hall clock told me that it was five minutes of eleven. Bareheaded I rushed around to the stables and fortunately found Christopher just putting the mare into the dogcart.

"Get in," I yelled, "and drive like a fiend!"

"Sir, sir? Where, sir?" asked Christopher.

"The station!" I cried, jumping up beside him; and we flew down the winding drive at a pace that I would not think of attempting in cold blood.

Through Mrs. Armistead's criminal delay in handing me the note many valuable minutes had been wasted, yet I thought I should still be in time perhaps to save Vincent from carrying out the last fatal step of his incredible folly. It might not be too late to part them, for in spite of what he had said in his note I could not believe that the worst had actually happened. As we approached the last strip of woods before we reached the station I caught sight of a puff of white smoke down the track. A moment later, when we drew up at the platform, the great locomotive thundered into the station, and there, at the other end of the platform, I saw them. There was Vincent, clad in the things he had worn on the train when we had first come through the fields of Wye, and with him was a remarkably pretty girl with beautiful wavy red hair, in a gray tailor suit and a smart black hat. Of course it was the secretary.

I waved at them frantically and they waved in return, and I could see Vincent smiling happily at me as they entered one of the carriages. As I came up with their carriage Vincent opened the window wide and thrust his head out. "Oh, Vincent!" was all I said; "am I too late?"

"Not at all," he said, gently, "you're just in time to congratulate me. But what I wanted of you, Arch"—and he leaned toward me and lowered his voice—"was to ask you to break it to my father."

"Then it's true?" I said, not quite able to believe it, even yet.

"Yes, it's true," he said aloud, and with a radiant smile he drew back a little so that I could see the erstwhile Miss Marsh. "It's true that I've married the secretary."

"But it's not," said that lady, much to my surprise, and thrusting out her pretty head. "It's not true a bit. He hasn't married the secretary at all. I was only 'playing' secretary. He's married no one but the Honorable Agatha, the first, last, and only honorable!"

And for proof of her astonishing words she snatched off her glove and displayed to my marveling gaze the big emerald cross of the Wyckhoff ring, twinkling in the sunshine.

At this moment the train began to move, and I was filled with a sudden and justifiable rage that Vincent should have so deceived me. To think that he had been in the secret all the time and had helped to make a fool of me! But one look at his face proved to me that I had done him an injustice. He was as stricken with amazement as I was, and I knew that then, and not until then, had he become acquainted with the truth. Gathering my wits quickly, for the train was moving faster, I ran after their carriage till I caught up with the window again. "Good-by!" I shouted, and "God bless you!" And Vincent, reaching out his big hand, had just time to catch mine in his strong grasp before I dropped back, outstripped, and he had withdrawn his radiant face from my view.

Afterward I learned many things. First, that they had been married very early that morning, before the rest of us were up, in the little chapel at Wye, with Mrs. Armistead, who was in the secret, as witness. That explained the delay in giving me the note. Dreading my interference, they had not wished me to know until the whole thing was well over and Mrs. Armistead back at Castle Wyckhoff. Second, that it had been the Honorable Agatha's own idea to play the part of secretary to her aunt, thus improving upon her father's plan, and making it still more difficult for the competing suitors to discover her identity. Third, that her reason for telling Vincent that Agatha Sixth was the real Honorable Agatha was only to prove him once more and to the uttermost. And Vincent had stood the trial without faltering and had even proved himself equal to discrediting his wishes. Yet I really think that on that night when he had agreed with me that it was best to give her up he meant to do so, but his love for the girl proved stronger than his love for gold or his feeling for his friend. And it was thus that the boy won—because he had loved truly and faithfully.

And I also learned afterward that the six Agathas, shortly after the elopement of Vincent and the secretary—that was, had all gone to their homes in America. Later some of them married certain suitors who had once been guests at Castle Wyckhoff. Among these were Agatha First and young Brancepoth, who, I am happy to say, has led a reformed life since his marriage. And it also came to pass that Vincent and his bride took possession of Castle Wyckhoff as their country seat when they came back from their honeymoon. And there I often visited them.

THE END.

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THE END.

R. P. Stolsworth spent Christmas week with Caesar Hayes and family near Shackelford. He told us he had a fine time. We wouldn't have believed him if he'd said anything else.

County News

From Our Exchanges

MIAMI

Mrs. Mary C. Erwin

Mrs. Mary C. Casebolt Erwin was born in Braxton county, Virginia, October 21, 1818, and died at her home near Miami, Mo., Saturday, December 26, 1908, having attained the ripe old age of 90 years, 2 months and 5 days. After having lived for more than half a century in her native state, she came with her husband and family to Missouri in 1871, where she has since made her home. Her husband John Erwin died about 23 years ago, since which time Mrs. Erwin has made her home with her children.

She was the mother of twelve children, seven of whom survive to revere her memory.

The surviving children in the order of their ages are: George of West Virginia, Mrs. W. M. Barrett, of Washington, D. C. Mrs. Chas. Dobbins, and George Thompson of Buena Vista, Co., Mo. Mrs. Julia Gains, of Wakenda, Mo. J. W. and I. N. Erwin of Miami Mo.—Miami News.

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Mullins entertained a number of their friends at a turkey dinner Saturday. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Allen, Mrs. George Jett and children, Mrs. Kathleen Mullins and Don Mullins. Thomas Utley returned from Stockton, Kansas Christmas day. He had to stay all night at Brunswick and come away the early train. There he found his daughter, Mrs. Jessie Pyle of St. Jacob, Ill., waiting for the same train and they came up together. We had the pleasure of conversing with Ernest B. Millar, of West Australia, now a student at the State University during his stay in the city as the guest of Rev. George E. Jones and wife. Among other things, he said that the sun here seems to be on the wrong side, and that rabbits are the most plentiful animals in Australia, the government having a standing offer of \$50,000 for a suggestion that will lead to their extermination.—Mrs. J. M. Nul was at the post office for a few hours Christmas day. The office force looked upon her visit as one of their best Christmas gifts.—News.

Miss Clyta Lyon

Among the many sad duties that have come to us this week there is none more full of sadness than that of recording the death of a friend and beautiful though it was of Miss Clyta Lyon, the tenderest and fairest flower that fell when the Grim Reaper threw his relentless sickle into the waving grain, gathering wheat and flowers at one fell stroke.

Miss Lyon's sickness was of short duration. It was an attack of pneumonia which began the Friday before Christmas and resulted in her death at 11 o'clock p. m., Sunday December 27, 1908.

Miss Clyta Lyon was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. T. Lyon and was born October 6, 1888 and had attained the age of 20 years, 2 months and 21 days at time of her death. Her mother died several years ago; the living members of the family besides the father are O. O. Lyons, Mrs. Oua Lyon.

Miss Clyta was a member of Frank Giesler, Misses Nannie and the Presbyterian church of Harmony and was a consecrated earnest disciple of the Christ whom she served.

The funeral services were held at the home Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock, and were conducted by the pastor Rev. L. F. Clemens of Marshall, after which the remains were laid to rest in the graveyard at Harmony.—Miami News.

You will get relief from Pain by taking one of Dr. Miles' Anti-Pain Pills, when an attack first appears.

Heart Troubles

The heart may be weak just the same as the eyes, stomach or other organs. It often happens that a person is born with a weak heart. Then again disease, fevers, over-exertion, anxiety, nervousness, rheumatism, etc. weaken the heart. The result is shortness of breath, palpitation, pain in the heart, or in some of the nerves of the chest or abdomen. The heart should be strengthened with a tonic, and for this nothing equals Dr. Miles' Heart Cure.

"I had Indigestion last fall as I thought in a mild form. I was weak, tired feeling, and short of breath could hardly go about, and a good deal of the time sort of an asthmatic breathing and extremely nervous. I began taking Dr. Miles' Heart Cure and Nervine and now I feel so much better in every way. I am so thankful that I began taking this medicine, and shall not hesitate to tell others how much good it has done me."

MRS. F. J. NORTON, Greenville, New York. Your druggist sells Dr. Miles' Heart Cure, and will authorize him to return price of first bottle (only) if it fails to benefit you. Miles Medical Co., Elkhart, Ind.

HOUSTONIA

TURKEY RAN AWAY—An amusing incident happened to M. T. Cook, the poultry man recently. Mr. Cook has been buying turkeys and picking and packing them for the Christmas market. The operation consists of cutting the turkey's jugular vein, hanging them up and dry picking them, after which they are packed away in barrels. Sometimes however, the fellow who handles the knife fails to sever the jugular and Mr. Turkey still lives after being picked—at least it so happened in this particular instance. A turkey had been "stuck" hung up and picked, and laid to one side to be packed. Imagine the surprise of Cook and the pickers when the aforesaid turkey, his body as bare as the top of Glenn Robertson's head, jumped up and calmly trotted away.—Houstonian.

ARROW, ROCK

W. W. Hains, the real estate man of Marshall, was looking after business here yesterday. He made this office a pleasant call and renewed his subscription to the Statesman and informed us that he had sold the two brick business houses belonging to Mr. Spence to J. W. Nixon. The price paid we understand was \$2300.

Will Gambrel and wife of near Concord, met with a bad accident Monday. They had been down and spent the day at the home of John Davis, in Cooper and while on their way home their horse ran away throwing each of them out of the buggy and Mr. Gambrel was drug about a hundred yards and was badly bruised and skinned up and although his wounds are very painful the doctor found no broken bones and does not think that he is seriously injured. His wife escaped without injury.—Ernest Harvey's team ran away with him at Napton Monday, tearing up his buggy and harness and throwing him out upon his head. He was so rejoiced that he escaped without injury, save a good shake up, that he came over to tell his friends here of his fortunate misfortune.—Statesman.

SWEET SPRINGS

Wm. Dierker is very ill with blood poison. It is thought one of his fingers will have to be amputated.—Otto Meyers, son of W. D. Meyer, was severely burned in the face by gun powder. He was emptying some powder into a cigar box by lamp light to reload some shells and without any apparent cause the powder exploded.—Herald.

FOR SALE—A general merchandise store at Wanamaker. Apply to W. A. SMILEY R. F. D. Blue Lick, Mo. if

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